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EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF BURNOUT

1.	I usually feel tired by noon.	T	F
2.	I daydream of earning lots of money and quitting.	T	F
3.	The cases keep coming at me. There's no stopping them. I feel trapped.	T	F
4.	I delay looking at the calendar.	T	F
5.	I feel isolated from colleagues and actually quite disinterested in them.	T	F
6.	Frankly, I care little about the outcome of most cases. I just want to get them concluded.	T	F
7.	I have lots of good ideas, but no time or energy to carry them out.	T	F
8.	I cannot wait for the day to end. I am impatient and inattentive by 3 o'clock.	T	F
9.	I am too heavily burdened by committee and other assignments.	T	F
10.	I am reluctant to be socially identified as a judge because of all the questions that will follow.	T	F
11.	I neglect correspondence and paperwork more and more.	T	F
12.	I feel impotent rage at colleagues who seem to keep shorter hours or do less work.	T	F
13.	It's been a long time since I've had an interesting discussion on a nonlegal topic.	T	F
14.	Many cases have begun to sound alike; I have heard it all before.	T	F
15.	Vacations don't do much for me because I keep thinking of all I have to do. So I've stopped taking time off.	T	F
16.	Increasingly, I want to sleep, drink, get away.	T	F
17.	When I meet court staff and lawyers outside, I sometimes can't place who they are.	T	F
18.	Cancellations or postponements give me almost physical relief.	T	F
19.	I am easily irritated and frequently feel impatient.	T	F
20.	After making an appointment or promising to do something, I often fail to write it down and may forget it entirely.	T	F
21.	No matter how overworked I am, I feel entirely confident in my memory and judgment.	T	F
22.	Early in the day, my mind wanders to what I'll have for lunch, and all the little chores I'll try to take care of that day.	T	F
23.	I've stopped fighting with the administrators. It doesn't matter any more to me.	T	F
24.	I have frequent blanks of recall about cases before me. Despite that, I refuse to take more notes.	T	F
25.	When others get emotional, they seem strange or funny to me.	T	F
26.	I keep glancing at the time a lot. I cannot wait for the day to end.	T	F
27.	Sometimes I cannot make out my own notes.	T	F
28.	My daydreams are mostly about money, sex, and peace.	T	F
29.	I am often late because I want to finish reading or doing something.	T	F
30.	While others talk to me in my chambers, I find myself staring at my collection of framed degrees and awards.	T	F



Personal Burnout Prevention Plan

By Isaiah M. Zimmerman

SELECT ONLY **ONE** ACTION FROM EACH TRACK: THEN UNDERTAKE ALL FOUR ACTIONS TOGETHER OVER A TWO-WEEK PERIOD.

I. PROFESSIONAL TRACK (Choose only one)

1. Discuss your thoughts and feelings about your work with your closest friend and your spouse.
2. Resign from one committee or board.
3. Read one book in a totally unfamiliar field or topic.
4. Ask a respected law professor or colleague to critique a sample of your recent writing.
5. Tell several close colleagues that you are going through a period of important personal reassessment. Do not be apologetic, defensive, or humorous about it.

II. PERSONAL TRACK (Choose only one)

1. Meditate, pray, or simply relax, with eyes shut, for a brief period each day.
2. At home, finish one house-repair or gardening project.
3. By telephone, "visit" and chat with three friends you have not seen for a long time.
4. Ask your spouse to be the initiating and active partner in sex and affection for two weeks.
5. Go through your family photo albums. Think about the course of your life and discuss it with your family.

III. PHYSICAL TRACK (Choose only one)

1. Do an alternating tensing and relaxing exercise for three minutes, twice each day.
2. After medical consultation, start light jogging, rapid walking, or swimming daily.
3. Arrange not to be disturbed, and take a short nap daily in the office, or as soon as you come home.
4. Cut out all sugar and salt in your diet, and limit coffee, tea, and liquor to one drink a day.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE TRACK (Choose only one)

1. Exchange your briefcase for a larger in-basket and take no work home.
2. Take an hour off each week to visit around your courthouse and get acquainted with the people who work there. Show an active interest in their jobs and problems.
3. At the end of each day, take 15 minutes to talk the day over with your whole staff and go over plans for the next day.
4. Find funds and time for a course or workshop not directly related to your work: a "mini-sabbatical."
5. Invite your administrative staff to two "brainstorming" sessions (one week apart) where no ideas will be criticized during the session.

It is suggested that the above program or a similar concept be carried out once every six months as a form of personal renewal and as an "early warning system." The value inherent in such an approach is that no matter how heavy the work at the court gets, the quality and liveliness of one's personal life must not yield to the pressures involved.